

**Belmont Housing Trust
MINUTES
Meeting of April 8, 2004**

Present: Roger Colton, Chair; Sallye Bleiberg, Jonathan Jacoby, Ann Silverman, and Judie Feins, members. Also present: Jeffrey Wheeler, Belmont Town Planning Coordinator.

MINUTES: Judie Feins

1. Public Hearing on the 2004 HOME Funds

The Town needs to submit its annual action plan for the use of the 2004 HOME funds, which become available on 7/1/2004. Ninety (90) percent of the funds will go toward the B St. affordable housing project (\$109,000). The remainder (10%) goes to Newton and Belmont for administrative costs.

2. Community Development Department—Report on B Street project

Progress has been made on the RFP for land disposition, the land survey, retaining legal counsel, and seeking additional funding (in the form of a proposal to the LISC Suburban Housing Initiative). We will also arrange for \$10,000 in down payment assistance for 1st-time homebuyers, through the American Dream program. The Planning Board approved the zoning amendment needed for B Street, and it will appear on the warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting. Finally, the environmental review memo is done and is in its review period. This document—which is required before acquisition or construction using HOME funds—presented a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

3. **TO DO:** Roger and Nancy will talk with Jeffrey about establishing official files for the Housing trust.

4. Consolidated Plan

The next consolidated plan is due in one year, covering the period 2006-2010. It will need to draw on new (2000) Census data, and a new housing plan will need to be included. The Trust needs to figure out how the work will be carried out on this plan. (The Town's last plan was prepared by the Fair Housing Committee.)

QUESTION FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION: Should the next housing plan be formally adopted by Town Meeting?

5. Zoning Board of Appeals

There was a discussion at the last ZBA meeting about the impending 40B application for the Belmont Uplands. Since none of the ZBA members is experienced in the 40B process, the Board would like to get some materials and then meet with the Trust or with experts the Trust recommends.

TO DO: The Trust (Roger) will get materials to them from the MHP website and will suggest that they invite Aaron Gornstein to speak with them.

The ZBA has proposed local 40B regulations on the table, which were drafted by Edie Netter.

6. Brighton Street update

The RFP for developing the Brighton Street property is all draft, and it will be released ASAP. There is a 30-day period for proposals to be filed.

Habitat E.D. John Judge is leaving in June, so the momentum is dissipating—especially about starting to raise funds. The fundraising campaign needs to be planned now! But Habitat *is* talking with the environmental consultants about remediation costs, and the Town has retained a housing attorney to deal with the documents for both B and Brighton Sts.

7. Belmont Uplands land swap

Darrell King (TMM Precinct 1), Martha Moore (TMM Precinct 3), and Carolyn Bishop (TMM Precinct 1) appeared to inform the Trust about a proposal they are advocating regarding prospective development at the Belmont Uplands. They want to convince the developer to swap the land where the housing is currently sited (in the O'Neill proposal) for the site of the former MDC skating rink (adjacent to Rte. 2). They acknowledged that it is unclear whether the developer would agree to this swap, even if the Town were to strongly support it.

There was a discussion of the differences between the two proposals. Why should the Housing Trust support this rather than the 40B proposal? The advocates argued that this project would move more quickly to construction and thus benefit the Town's revenues more.

The Trust was asked to take a position on the land swap proposal: the vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions.

8. Met State

Roger reported that —regarding the long-awaited development of the Met State land—Will Brownsberger indicates the Board of Selectmen will only deal with Lexington around funds for traffic mitigation, not around the issue of credit for affordable housing units. It was agreed that the Trust cannot pursue this issue on its own. But access to the affordable units for Belmont residents (i.e., a Belmont resident preference) is something we *can* handle.

QUESTION: How do we follow up on this point?

9. Impending Catholic Church closures

Judie reported on her phone conversation with Lisa Alberghini, Executive Director of the Planning Office of Urban Affairs (POUA), which is the nonprofit formed by the Boston Archdiocese to develop affordable housing. In light of the possible closure of Our Lady of Mercy Parish (and perhaps even of St. Luke's as well), she encouraged the Trust to send her a letter expressing Belmont's interest and support for affordable housing development there.

TO DO: Judie will draft such a letter and circulate it to the Trust members.